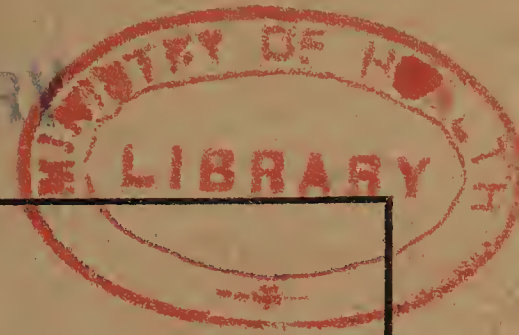


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**SOUTH MOLTON  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

AND THE

**SANITARY INSPECTOR**

FOR THE

**Year Ending December 31st, 1936.**

**W. GRADDON MORTIMER,**

**Medical Officer of Health.**



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF  
HEALTH FOR THE SOUTHMOLTON RURAL DISTRICT.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Report.

Area (Acres) .....	117,432
Population.....	9,217
Rateable Value .....	£27,601
Number of Inhabited Houses .....	2689
Sum represented by a Penny Rate .....	£121 15 0

The district is Agricultural—there are 28 Villages. Some of them have Markets and Auctions regularly. Social conditions show gradual improvement and unemployment is little. A large number of men are employed on roads, quarries, building trades. There is a reduction of those employed on farms.

**VITAL STATISTICS.**

Births—Legitimate, 53 males; 58 females. Illegitimate, 3 males; 4 Females. Total—56 males, 62 females.  
Still Births—Legitimate, 5 males; 1 female. Illegitimate, nil. Total—5 males; 1 female.  
Birth Rate—118 Live Births; Birth Rate per 1,000, 12.9.  
Still Birth Rate, per 1,000, 49.8.  
Birth Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales—14.8.  
Death Rate—66 males, 56 females; Total, 122. Death Rate per 1,000, 13.2. Death Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales—12.1.  
Deaths from disease and accidents of Pregnancy and Child-Birth—Puerperal Sepsis, 0; Other causes, 0; Total, 0.  
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age—Legitimate, 59 per 1,000 live and still births.  
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age for England and Wales—59 per 1,000.  
Deaths of Infants under one year of age—Legitimate, 2 males, 4 females; Illegitimate, 1 female. Total, 2 males, 5 females  
Death Rate of Legitimate Infants under one year of age—54 per 1,000. Illegitimate, 144.4 per 1,000.  
Deaths from Measles at all ages—None.  
Deaths from Whooping Cough at all ages—None.  
Deaths from Diarrhoea under 2 years—None.  
Deaths from Cancer at all ages—14.



## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

A Whole-time Medical Officer.

A Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor—Mr. Oxland, A.R.S.I.  
M.S.I.A.

And an Assistant Sanitary Inspector.

7 District Medical Officers, who are also Public Vaccinators.

### Hospitals.

#### *Tuberculosis—*

- a* Hawley Sanatorium (in Barnstaple Borough)—28 beds.
- b* Sydney House, Torrington, established shortly after War. 48 beds. At first early notified cases of Tuberculosis were admitted, but since 1932 notified cases not taken—now delicate children.

#### *Maternity—*

Department of the North Devon Infirmary.

#### *Isolation of Infectious Disease—*

Up to now we have sent nearly all our cases to Exeter Isolation Hospital at Whipton. In the future there is to be some new arrangement whereby all our cases will go to Tiverton, I believe: the details are not fully worked out.

#### *Smallpox—*

If any arose Smallpox Hospital of the Devon County Council.

#### *General—*

Barnstaple and North Devon Infirmary—8 beds. Is well equipped for medical and all surgical cases, and of great use to North Devon.

A small Cottage Hospital at South Molton.

#### *Clinics and Treatment Centres—*

Tuberculosis—N. Devon Infirmary, under Dr. McMillan, Tuberculosis Officer.

Venereal Clinic—Do., under Dr. Jones.

#### *Professional Nursing in the Home—*

The District Nurses at Chulmleigh, Witheridge, North Molton and Bishopsnympton. Other villages are without District Nurses as there is a difficulty to meet their expenses.

*Laboratory Facilities*—No change.

*Ambulance Facilities*—

Area is served by an Ambulance from South Molton, and occasionally from Barnstaple. I consider the Ambulance service in the area is adequate.

## PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

*Notifiable Infectious Diseases*—

Scarlet Fever—Total notified, 14 cases. 7 in North Molton, 3 Witheridge, 1 Meshaw, 2 Chulmleigh, 1 Fileigh.

Diphtheria—6 cases. 2 Witheridge, 1 East Anstey, 3 North Molton.

Enteric, paratyphoid B. 1 case, Chulmleigh. Puerperal Pyrexia, 1 case, North Molton; Pneumonia, 1 case, West Anstey.

All cases of Diphtheria were sent to Hospital at Exeter.

5 cases of Scarlet Fever were sent to Hospital at Exeter.

	<i>Notified.</i>		<i>Admitted to Hospital at Exeter.</i>	
Scarlet Fever	14	5		
Diphtheria	6	6		
Enteric Paratyphoid	1	—		
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0		
Pneumonia	1	0		

	Under	One Year	1	2	3	4	5	5-10	10-15	15-25	26-65	Over 65
Scarlet Fever	0		1	2	1	1	5	2	1	1		
Diphtheria					1	1	3	1				
Enteric												
Pneumonia										1		

Last year, 1936, we carried through an immunization scheme for Witheridge. There were notified 3 cases, 2 cases in Witheridge and one in an adjoining parish, and as the condition of the houses were such as a spread of the disease was feared some 800-820 injections were given—in 3 successive weeks, *i.e.*, 200-300 each week. We noticed at first 300 turned up; next week rather fewer, and the last week again fewer.

No ill effects were noticed—some had a swollen arm for a few days.

At the same time we brought our immunization scheme at North Molton up-to-date. In 1933 we started there and children born since or too young them to be immunized were given the opportunity of being immunized—and some who missed the first time. Some 40 children had 3 injections each. This was thought necessary because we had 3 cases of Diphtheria notified in 1936. Young children who could not have been immunized before. This is a very beneficial scheme.

*Scarlet Fever*—14 cases notified. Swabs from throats of Scarlet Fever and suspected Scarlet Fever are being more commonly taken, especially in cases of Scarlet Fever, without rash or with very transient rash, and the presence or absence of the Haemolytic Streptococcus helps the diagnose. Where there are facilities for home isolation we find cases do quite well, and one experience is that isolation in Fever Hospitals—except for cases that cannot be properly isolated at home—is of no great value in preventing spread of this disease.

The Paratyphoid B was a mild case.

*Cancer*—14 cases. 5 male, 9 females: Gastric Carcinoma, Males, 71, 69, 68; females, 74; Gall Bladder, 82 females; Breast, 68 females; Sarcoma of Skull, 60 females; Carcinoma of Larynx, 44 females; Carcinoma of Liver, 68 females; Inoperable Carcinoma of Ovary, 41 females; Bronchia Carcinoma, 44 males; Bladder, 59 males; 2 other cases, females. Shows a decrease.

*Tuberculosis*—Number of cases remaining on the Register on December 31st was as follows:—

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Pulmonary	22	12	34
Non-Pulmonary	2	3	39

3 cases died, all female and Pulmonary, during 1936. ages 39, 42, 32.

Six fresh cases were notified during 1936.



## TOTAL DEATHS.

	<i>Males—</i> 66.	<i>Females—</i> 56.
Cerebral Haemorrhage .....	10	1
Heart Disease .....	19	18
Other Disorders of the Circu- lation .....	5	3
Aneurysis .....	—	1
Pneumonia .....	2	1
Bronchitis .....	1	1
Tubercle Pulmonary .....	—	3
Cancer .....	5	9
Suicide .....	2	—
Other Violence .....	6	—
Other Defined Diseases .....	6	5
Senility .....	3	3
Diabetes .....	3	2
Acute Nephritis .....	—	3
Influenza .....	1	—
Diphtheria .....	1	—
Congenital Debility .....	1	5

These call for no special comment.

### HOUSING (Rural Workers) ACT, 1926.

These acts have been in operation for 10 years and the Act (1926) has been twice extended. Will now continue until June 24th, 1938.

10 houses have been re-conditioned during the year, and this makes 75 since 1926. This Act is of great benefit and I wish more advantage was taken of it.

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I wish to record my grateful thanks to Mr. Willey, who is always ready to give me his advice and help; and to Mr. Oxland, who is a very able officer.

Your obedient servant,

W. GRADDON MORTIMER.





# SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT

for the Year 1936.

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## WATER.

Works for the provision of a piped supply of water for the village of Rackenford were completed during the year.

Water is derived from a borehole 157ft. deep from which it is raised by means of a borehole pump operated by a windmill to a water tower from where it gravitates to the village.

Up to the present time the windmill has been equal to all demands and if this should continue to be the case the scheme will be most inexpensive to maintain.

75 % of the houses in the village have taken the water in and a standpipe has been erected for the use of the remainder. The fact that the Council bear the cost of tapping the main and piping the water to and including a stopcock placed as near to the boundary of the premises to be served as possible, is a great help and incentive to householders to avail themselves of an indoor supply.

The scheme for a piped supply of water for the village of Kingsnympton was almost completed at the end of the year, all that remained to be done being tappings and house services. Water in this case also is derived from a borehole of a depth of 140ft. The water is raised by means of a borehole pump operated by a windmill and is delivered into a 20,000 gallons mass concrete reservoir constructed on the same site as the borehole is situated, from where it gravitates to the village. It is anticipated that the percentage of indoor supplies in this village will be even larger than at Rackenford.

These two schemes were badly required and will be the means of relieving the inhabitants of the anxiety formerly experienced during dry periods.

Proper schemes are now in existence at North Molton, Bishopsnympton, Witheridge, Chulmleigh, Rackenford and Kingsnympton, and a small piped supply is available to most of the inhabitants at Brayford. This latter scheme cannot be regarded as complete however, as the head is insufficient to supply all the houses in the village.

The remainder of the district is supplied by wells, both public and private, and a few private piped supplies which are, however, inadequate.

Proper schemes are desirable in the following villages, viz.:—Chittlehampton, Molland, Burrington, Alswere, George-nympton and West Buckland.

The Council are alive to these requirements, but owing to the great amount of work to be done in other directions the provision of proper supplies to these places will take time.

Extensions of the water mains have been made at Witheridge and Chulmleigh, the former to supply a row of nine cottages formerly dependent on unsatisfactory wells and the latter on account of new building operations.

Plans for the replacement of an existing 2in. cast iron main in Shoot Street and Leigh Road, Chulmleigh, which has become badly corroded have been prepared.

Particulars of work done in connection with water supplies during the year are:—

No. of inspections carried out in connection with private supplies .....	11
No. of samples taken for analysis from existing supplies .....	9
No. of new water supplies provided to existing houses (excluding supplies from public mains) .....	1
No. of water supplies to existing houses improved (excluding supplies from public mains) .....	8
No. of supplies taken into existing houses from public mains .....	71
No. of visits and inspections to public water supplies .....	158

## DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

A sewer extension has been carried out at Witheridge which had for its object the abolition of unsatisfactory cesspits and the houses concerned have been connected to the new sewer.

A scheme for the improvement of the sewerage at Yeo Mill, West Anstey, has been prepared and is to be submitted to the Ministry of Health for sanction to borrow the necessary money to defray the cost.

Proper sewerage and modern sewage treatment works are in operation at North Molton, Bishopsnympton, Witheridge, West Buckland, Rackenford and Chittlehamholt.

Instructions have been given for the preparation of a scheme to provide for the necessary replacement and required new sewers together with proper treatment works at Chulmleigh, and it is recognised that a new scheme for Kingsnympton cannot long be delayed.



These schemes will be prepared as soon as circumstances permit. Other places where new or improved schemes are desirable are:—Molland, Burrington, Chittlehampton, Mariansleigh and Georgenympton.

Details of drainage work carried out during the year are:—

No. of new drains laid to existing houses .....	30
No. of extensions of drains .....	2
No. of drains of existing premises repaired .....	3
No. of drains cleared .....	2

### **Closet Accommodation.**

No. of new closets constructed .....	26
No. of earth closets and privies converted to water closets	6
No. of new closet pans fixed .....	21
No. of flushing cisterns fixed .....	8

### **PUBLIC CLEANSING.**

The collection of refuse at the expense of the rates is undertaken at Chulmleigh and Witheridge, but the Council during the year have had under consideration a scheme for the collection of the refuse from the whole of the area and bringing it to a central place for disposal by incineration.

This subject was introduced on account of the fact that several parishes had applied for a tip or a collection and the point arose which was the cheaper way of dealing with the matter, viz.: by parochial collections or one system embracing the whole area. This question has not yet been answered and the matter is still under consideration.

A scheme for the collection of the refuse from the whole area and its disposal at one place has many advantages, the chief of which would be the abolition of the many uncontrolled tips which exist throughout the district.

Refuse tips are provided by the Council in many villages, but until the collection of refuse is undertaken one cannot hope that all refuse will be deposited in the proper place. Some of these tips are a good distance from the villages and it cannot be expected of those who have not the facilities for the removal of their refuse that they will use the tips as they should be used. As a consequence refuse is seen lying about in hedges and on odd plots of ground by road sides, etc.

### **NUISANCES.**

Nine complaints as to nuisances were received during the year, 8 were abated as the result of informal action and in the remaining case abatement followed the service of a statutory notice.

## **SCHOOLS.**

There are 28 public elementary schools in the district. An effort was made to obtain the conversion of existing pail closets at the British School, Witheridge, to water closets, but owing to the possibility of a new school being erected the matter has not been pursued.

Several visits have been made to the various schools, but it has not been found necessary to take any action on account of sanitary defects.

## **Disinfection.**

20 premises were disinfected during the year, following infectious diseases, including a school at Witheridge.

No steam disinfecter is available for disinfecting bedding, etc., and this has of necessity to be dealt with in the rooms disinfected.

## **INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.**

### **Milk.**

In accordance with arrangements made by the County Council 78 samples of milk were sent to the County Laboratory for bacteriological examination during the year. All these samples were taken at the farm at the time of production.

Samples are reported on as having passed or failed, a pass being milk equal to the Accredited standard, a fail a milk below this standard.

Of the 78 samples examined 64 passed, giving a percentage of passes of a trifle over 82 as compared with last year's percentage of 76.47.

55 of the total number of samples had a count of less than 30,000, 71 had a count of less than 100,000, whilst only 7 had a count of over 100,000.

In 7 cases the count did not exceed 1,000.

B. Coli was absent in 1 c.c. in 48 cases, present in 1 c.c. in 7 cases, in 1/10th c.c in 10 cases and in 1/100th c.c in 13 cases. The average mean count was 36,500.

In all cases where samples are returned as having failed the farms are visited and instructions given in clean milk production. Repeat samples are taken at a later date when as a rule the milk reaches the required standard.

The cowsheds continue to improve and producers of milk generally are becoming more and more interested in clean milk production.



## **Slaughterhouses and Meat.**

There are 11 slaughterhouses in the district, eight registered and three licensed. The registered slaughterhouses are generally badly situated in relation to present thought and requirements.

No bad or diseased meat was found during the year and only one emergency slaughter reported. It is impossible for this branch of the work to receive the attention it requires.

25 slaughtermen are licensed under the Slaughter of Animals Act 1933. It is a grouse with some of the butchers that a man has to hold a licence to slaughter in a slaughterhouse whereas anyone can slaughter an occasional pig outside.

## **Bakehouses—**

There are 12 bakehouses in the area, which are kept in a sanitary condition and there has been no cause for complaint concerning them.

## **HOUSING.**

During the year 20 houses were completed by the Council. These were as follows:—

Six at East Anstey erected without subsidy to make good a shortage of houses which existed.

Four at Mariansleigh and six at Bishopsnympton to re-house persons displaced from Clearance Areas and four at North Molton to re-house persons displaced from individual houses dealt with under Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1930.

All the houses erected for re-housing are let at a rental of 3s. per week.

The Council's immediate housing programme is as follows: Four houses at Brayford, proposed to be erected without subsidy; eight at Bishopsnympton; eight at Kingsnympton; and two at Romansleigh, to re-house persons displaced from houses to be demolished or put out of use for human habitation as a result of action under Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1930, and subject to a Clearance Order being confirmed; eight houses at Witheridge for re-housing purposes.

An intensive effort is to be made to put in hand this coming year all re-housing required.

## HOUSING STATISTICS.

1.—Inspection of dwelling-houses during the year.	
(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected during the year for housing defects .....	227
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose .....	339
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 .....	107
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose .....	134
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation .....	34
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation .....	176
II. Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices.	
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers .....	74
III. Action under Statutory powers during the year.	
A. Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930.	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs .....	77
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices—	
(a) By Owners .....	34
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners .....	0
B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied .....	0
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices—	
(a) By Owners .....	0
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners .....	0
C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which demolition orders were made .....	2
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders .....	0



D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930—

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which closing orders were made	0
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which closing orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit .....	0

From the above it will be seen that 227 houses were inspected during the year and 34 were found to be unfit for human habitation and will be dealt with by Clearance or under Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1930, or the corresponding section of the 1936 Act.

In 74 cases defects have been remedied as the result of communications or other action by myself.

The total number of demolition orders made as compared with the total number of Time and Place Notices served under Section 19 of the Act is small, as to save the cost of demolition Owners will usually give an undertaking that the premises will be used as a store or for some other purpose not for human habitation and the Council have been in the habit of accepting such.

Another form of undertaking the Council have accepted in cases where through old age or infirmity it is considered undesirable to remove the occupants is that the house will not be used for human habitation after the expiration of the existing tenancy.

In other cases Owners agree to recondition and every encouragement is given them to submit schemes for reconditioning under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts.

10 houses have been reconditioned under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts during the year, making the total number of houses reconditioned since the original Act was introduced of 75. 10 further schemes are being carried out.

The scope for this Act is great if Owners of Cottage Property could be brought to the full realisation of the benefits to be derived therefrom.

The houses and buildings in the Bishopsnympton Clearance Area have all been demolished.

Tenders were invited for the demolition of the houses and buildings in the Mariansleigh Clearance Area, but owing to lack of competition the lowest tender was considerably above the estimated cost and no tender was accepted.

The Houses are still standing as the conditions for a more favourable tender do not appear to have improved.

The site of these houses as also that of the Clearance Area at Bishopsnympton was, together with other land, purchased by the Council for re-housing purposes and the Council are thus responsible for the clearance of the buildings.

The re-housing accommodation at Molland was not ready for occupation at the end of the year and as a consequence the houses in the Clearance Area are still occupied.

In this case the Owners are responsible for Clearance.

### OVERCROWDING.

The preliminary overcrowding survey during which 1,524 houses were visited resulted in 22 houses being found to be overcrowded, giving a percentage of overcrowded houses of 1.44. These were in the following parishes:—

Georgenympton	1	Warkleigh	1
North Molton	3	Burrington	1
Chittlehampton	1	Bishopsnympton	5
Filleigh	1	Rose Ash	3
Knowstone	2	Meshaw	1
Witheridge	3		

The total number of 22 was subsequently reduced to 15 as the result of removals, re-housing under Slum Clearance Schemes and Landlords placing other accommodation at the disposal of overcrowded families.

In six of the remaining cases the Owners in some cases and in others the occupiers, gave undertakings that the permitted numbers would be reduced within a specified time on account of children going into service or that the premises would be enlarged to a sufficient size to accommodate the family.

There remains therefore nine cases to be dealt with, viz.:

2 at North Molton	3 at Witheridge
3 at Bishopsnympton	1 at Rose Ash

In the cases of North Molton, Bishopsnympton and Witheridge the Council have decided to build houses of a sufficient size to accommodate the families and it was thought that the Rose Ash case would be dealt with by re-housing under a Slum Clearance Scheme.



The houses concerned have been inspected by the Medical Officer of Health, however, and it is now thought that the case is not one for clearance.

The Council will therefore have to reconsider this case, but it is extremely unlikely that they will build one house and a solution of the problem will be sought in other directions.

The measurement of the houses previously visited in the course of the preliminary survey and which had not been measured to ascertain if they were overcrowded, or measured if overcrowded to see the extent thereof is proceeding.

This when completed will form a valuable record which will need to be kept up to date as new houses are erected or additions to existing houses added.

A. G. OXLAND, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Sanitary Inspector and Sanitary Surveyor.







